

PATENT

Docket No. 1232-4442

S/N 09/075,885

REMARKS**Claim Status**

Claims 2-13, 15-17, 19-23, 25-28 and 30-38 are pending. Of the pending claims, claims 2, 4, 6, 9, 11, 15, 23, 25, 26, 30-35, 37 and 38 are independent in form.

Claims 2-5, 11-13, 15-17, 20, 22, 23, 25-28, 30-32, 34, 35, 37 and 38 have been allowed; claims 9 and 10 objected to; and, claims 6-8, 19, 21, 33 and 36 rejected. By this Amendment, claims 2, 6, 9, 11, 15, 23, 33-35 and 37 are amended and claim 10 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. No new matter has been added.

Claim Objections

Claims 9-10 have been indicated as including allowable subject matter but have been objected to because of their dependence on rejected base claim 6. (See Office Action, pages 5-6, ¶2.)

Applicants have amended claim 9 to include the recitations of the rejected base pending claim 6, rendering claim 9 to thus now be in independent form.

Applicants have canceled claim 10, rendering the objection as to it moot.

Rejections Under 35 USC §103

Claims 6-8, 19, 21, 33 and 36 have been rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over USP 5,442,453 to Takagi et al. ("Takagi") in view of USP 5,737,646 to Nakajima et al. ("Nakajima"). (See Office Action, ¶1, pp. 3-5.)

While Applicants do not agree with the characterization of independent pending claims 6 and 33 and the stated rejections, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections of these

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independent claims and the claims dependent therefrom, and respectfully request reconsideration of in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks.

Applicants have amended independent claims 6 and 33 to incorporate the features of objected-to (and herein canceled) claim 10 and accordingly believe amended claims 6 and 33 to be allowable for incorporating such allowable subject matter. Accordingly, for at least the stated reasons, independent claims 6 and 33, and the claims depending therefrom, are believed allowable.

Allowed claims 11, 15, 23, 33-35 and 37 are also amended to clarify the claimed invention, and are believed to be none-the-less allowable as amended.

Dependent Claims

Applicants traverse the rejections of the dependent claims but have not independently addressed the rejections of the dependent claims because Applicants submit that the dependent claims are also allowable for at least similar reasons as stated for the independent claims from which they depend. Applicants however, reserve the right to address any individual rejections of the dependent claims should such be necessary or appropriate.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims as herein presented are allowable over the prior art of record and that the respective rejections and objections be withdrawn.

Applicants further submit that this application is hereby placed in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested.

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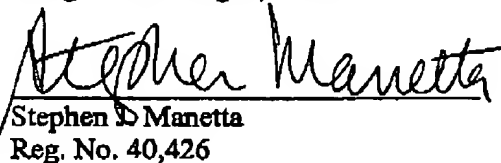
Docket No. 1232-4442S/N 09/075.565

Applicants believe no additional fees nor extension of time is required for this filing. However, should an extension of time be necessary to render this filing timely, such extension is hereby petitioned, and the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees that may be required for this paper, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 13-4500, Order No. 1232-4442.

Respectfully submitted,
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Dated: February 18, 2005

By:


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